

Claims 10-13 are rejected under 35 USC 102(a) as being anticipated by Smith et al. Applicant respectfully traverses.

The Examiner's attention is directed to Figure 3 and related Figures 4-6 of the instant application and also to Figure 5 of Smith et al. There is no structural element shown in Figure 5 that is comparable to element (6), a web structure, of the instant application. There is no disclosure of a similar functioning element anywhere in Smith et al that the undersigned could find. Following the insertion of the contact assembly into the chamber (2) of the multiple-connection strap (Fig. 1 and 2), the deformable web can be manipulated or not to form the structures shown in Fig. 4-6. These figures correspond to a through contact, a separating contact and a switching contact, respectively. Again there is no mention of these structures in Smith et al.

There is no structure element in Smith et al.'s Figure 5 that is comparable to the instant element (11), a parallel tap. From a review of the contact shown in Figure 5 and the associated description, such an element is not taught or suggested. A need for such an element is not suggested. Further its inclusion in the contact device would detract from the flush fit shown in Figure 4 of Smith et al.

The separating web (6) structural element is clearly not taught by Smith et al. Since anticipation requires each and every element to be taught in a single reference, the rejection should be withdrawn for this reason alone.

Further, the "one-piece plastic housing" of Smith et al., referred to in the Office Action, relates to the "body of the block 12" and not the complete connector strip. Applicant's one-piece is shown in Figures 1 and 2. The structures are clearly different. The cross section shown in Figures 4 and 6 of Smith et al illustrates that the aforementioned connector strip consists of at least three plastic components, meaning position 12 "connector block" (2x) and position 10 "frame" (line 67 in column 2 "Each connector block 12 is adapted to clamp onto the frame 10 and is therefore locked in place."). Position 10 is necessary as end piece (bottom) for the connector block 12. The

contact assembly embodiment of Smith cannot be inserted from the wiring side. This is in stark contrast with that claimed by Applicant.

Once the contact assembly of Smith et al. is installed, the contact spring assembly 70 cannot be converted to a spacing contact 50. With the embodiment shown, this must be done prior to inserting the contact sets into the connector block 12.

The mechanical stress on the contact spring is considerably lower for the design selected by Applicant. Even a deformed contact spring cannot prevent the insertion of a plug 10 since the insertion direction of the plug is from the fixed end to the free end of the contact spring, meaning counter to the direction in the cited reference.

Also note that the Applicant's contact locations 8 are protected against dirt and/or damage as a result of a slanted side positioning, as shown in Figures 7 and 8.

For the reasons set forth above, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In light of the above comments and amendments to the claims, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance. A notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee necessitated by this  
Amendment to our Deposit Account No. 22-0261.

Respectfully submitted,



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